

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested. Claims 2, 7-8, and 10 have been amended. Claims 1 and 6 have been cancelled. Support for the amendments may be found throughout the specification. No new matter has been added as a consequence of these amendments.

Claims 1-22, and 23-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,258,766 ("Romack") in view of U.S. Patent 5,676,705 ("Jureller").

Applicants submit that the amendments to the pending claims renders the rejections of claims 1-10 and 23 moot. For at least the following reasons, the claims are believed to be patentable over the cited references.

Applicants submit that the Examiner has failed to recognize the distinct steps within the method claims (*i.e.*, the distinction between the cleaning step and the conditioning step). Importantly, the present application and pending claims, such as claim 20, are directed to dry cleaning methods that include a conditioning step after a cleaning step.

For the Examiner's benefit, the Applicants note that the typical mode of operation for cleaning textiles involves introducing textiles into a drum, which is then sealed and filled with a cleaning treatment (including cleaning additives and CO₂). Furthermore, after contacting the textiles with the cleaning medium to clean the textiles, the cleaning medium (and soils, etc.) are separated from the textiles – typically by draining or venting it from the drum. Accordingly, it is subsequent to this separation that a conditioning step would commence.

In contrast, neither Romack nor Jureller teach – much less suggest – conducting a conditioning step in addition to a cleaning step. For example, the optional rinse step briefly discussed in Romack does not satisfy the requirements of the conditioning step of the pending claims. Specifically, Romack's optional rinse step is CO₂ based and may or may not include other co-solvents or water. However, Applicants highlight that Romack does not teach or suggest the inclusion of conditioning agents – and certainly not the conditioning agent of the pending claims.

Similarly, Applicants note Jureller's discussion of rinse cycles are limited further still to the use of CO₂ only (see Jureller at the Example section).

Applicants submit that inclusion of a fatty alcohol branched polyalkyloxylate as a conditioning agent in a non-cleaning step of Romack is not contemplated nor suggested in either Jureller or Romack. In other words, the reference the Examiner relies upon to provide the very agent that is not present in Romack is the very same reference that discusses not adding any agents to a rinsing medium. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the Examiner's obviousness rejection is nothing more than hindsight reconstruction, as the particular components and steps of the pending claims are not taught or suggested in any of the references cited.

Therefore, all objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney for Applicants at the telephone number indicated below in order to expeditiously resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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